

WHERE WOMEN MAY VOTE NOW

Extent and Some Results of the Suffrage Movement in the United States.

FULL RIGHTS IN FOUR STATES

Partial Rights in 28 Others—General Testimony That It Helps the Schools.

The System Called a Failure in Colorado, Which Gives Full Suffrage—In Other States With Full Exercise Opinions Differ as to Success—Moderate Amount of Independence Exercised—In Colorado Only Do Women of the Underworld Vote—Louisiana's Taxpayers Women Have Done Excellent Work in Promoting Public Health.

Amid the din and clamor that is going on over woman suffrage perhaps it is just as well to know something of the results of women's voting as it actually exists in this country. Many questions confront the inquirer:

Has woman suffrage been a success in those States where the full exercise is permitted? Do the women exercise their right independent of husbands or family? Do the poor women go to the polls in as proportionately large numbers as the well-to-do? Are the women of the underworld desirous of voting and do the police dictate the candidates for whom they shall vote? Is the political atmosphere any purer as the result of adoption of woman suffrage?

These and similar questions are answered in the material printed herewith, gathered by THE SUN's correspondents in various States where woman suffrage is exercised completely or in part.

There are four States in which women have the full suffrage, Idaho, Colorado, Utah and Wyoming.

In twenty-eight States and one Territory, Arizona, they may vote on school questions. These are Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Idaho, Kentucky, Kansas, Michigan, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Ohio, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming. Of course the four States where full suffrage is allowed are included in the list.

In Louisiana women taxpayers may vote on taxation questions only. In Iowa also they may vote on bonding matters. In Minnesota they may vote for public library trustees. In Kansas they may vote at municipal elections and on bonding matters. In Montana they may vote on bonding questions.

In one respect there seems to be a unanimity of opinion: the schools of States where the women vote on such matters have been improved greatly as a result. Many women have become school superintendents, and the opinion is general that it has been decidedly uplifting. These women attend to business strictly; they do not mix in politics.

It is also the opinion that where women have been elected to other county offices, such as treasurer or register, these offices have been managed well and solely for the public good.

The reports show that woman suffrage has not made the political atmosphere cleaner or purer. It is rare that better men have been nominated for office as the result of women voting.

In the States where full suffrage is allowed there is no testimony that the plan is an admitted success. In Colorado it is called a failure. In Denver the women of the underworld are sent to the polls by the police.

In Idaho the women vote as freely as the men, but there is no appreciable result of this fact. In Utah the Mormon women vote far more freely than gentle women, and they vote as they are told. The result is not calculated to advance the suffrage movement.

It has also been found that where women exercise the suffrage in part the voting is largely confined to clubwomen. The so-called poor women, except in Kansas, do not vote.

Rich women and clubwomen are chiefly those who take advantage of their opportunity. A large number of women in Iowa, for example, are clamoring for the suffrage. At the recent election in Des Moines, a city of nearly 100,000 people, only 12 women voted on school matters. In Detroit out of a female population of 200,000 only 6,000 registered.

The general opinion seems to be that the women soon tire of voting. Only in Colorado do the women of the underworld vote to any extent. A provision that women voters shall be mothers of children of school age or shall be taxpayers shuts out the undesirable women everywhere. It has also been found that they do not care to exercise the suffrage, judging, as is their nature, the whole-some light of day upon their lives.

The belief is general that women as a rule exercise moderate independence in voting. There is a complaint in Idaho that the preachers sway them, and of course in Utah it is taken as a matter of course that the Mormon women take orders from the church. In some of the States, like Nebraska, the husbands are said on the other hand to follow the wives in voting on school matters.

Many States the politicians are juggling with the suffragists, passing their bills in one house of a Legislature and killing them in the other. In no State is there anything especially virile in the movement as a matter of politics. From one State only there is a report of complete success. That State is Louisiana, where the women taxpayers are may

vote solely on matters of taxation. By this means New Orleans finally secured good sewerage and good water. The school buildings have been improved and the general health of the community has been improved. That kind of woman suffrage has been of great advantage to Louisiana.

Here are the reports for the reader to form his own conclusions about woman suffrage as it exists at present in the United States.

IN FULL SUFFRAGE STATES.

Division of Opinion in Idaho—Failure in Colorado—Doubt in Utah.

Boise, Idaho, April 24.—Equal suffrage was granted women in this State in 1896 by constitutional amendment and women first voted in 1898. They are qualified to hold any elective or appointive office and have been most generally elected as State and county school superintendents and county treasurers.

As a rule the women vote generally in about the same proportion as the men. They take great interest in politics and attend the political meetings in large numbers and are generally well informed on subjects of political economy and vote independently of the politics or opinions of their husbands.

Some critics of woman suffrage in this State declare that it gives preachers too much political influence; that the preachers propose reforms that are impossible, such as getting rid of women of the underworld and kindred subjects, and that they bring the churches too close to matters with which churches should have nothing to do. It is also declared that in spite of the political influence of preachers it does not seem the better men are nominated than before. To such critics the reply is made that in course of time and with more education in political matters this trouble will be overcome.

The equal franchise has of course given the Mormons a greatly increased vote, as the Mormon men and women vote almost as a unit, sometimes with one party and sometimes with the other.

Women of the underworld are not permitted to vote as they cannot take the oath of citizenship when registering.

So far as the permanent has gone it has shown that women are not as independent in politics as men, voting the ticket regardless of the men on it or the principles of a political nature which are involved. Most of them are Republicans or Democrats because their parents were, ignoring the politics of the husband.

Local option and prohibition receive a great deal more attention than financial or tariff questions, but there are many clubs for the purpose of educating women on economic questions.

Women make good school superintendents, as they attend to their duties strictly and take a great pride in achieving excellence in educational matters, consequently the public schools of Idaho are second to none in the Union.

The equal franchise has completely eliminated school electioneering, which was universal before. The candidate who would now attempt to secure votes by treating the school children hardly be elected to any office. The results of elections are more influenced by public meetings and personal work. Many people consider this a great improvement from the moral point of view, and because of the fact that it does not require that a candidate use a large amount of money in a campaign.

Here are two representative opinions as to the results of woman suffrage in Idaho. The first was written by a woman who has voted at every primary and regular election since the franchise was granted to the women of Idaho:

"It is well to start with the unquestioned fact that Idaho should be able to show the best results possible to secure from the woman's vote. We have no paupers, few foreigners and the women are far above the average in intelligence and ability.

After years of experience the opinion of the educated and intelligent is the benefit derived from equal suffrage.

"I believe the majority of men and women would agree that the political atmosphere is no clearer or purer and that the class of men nominated for office is no better than before the franchise was given to women. The fact is, the woman's vote has not proved the 'big stick' that we hoped it would be in forcing the politicians to fear the unknown strength of their constituents.

"Without doubt the ward politician is satisfied with conditions as they are, for greatly to their credit, women are easily fooled by the unscrupulous. A primary ticket with many objectionable men on it representing questionable interests can be elected by the simple expedient of adding the name of one good man and calling it the church ticket.

"Generally the women vote as do men, on party or selfish lines, some vote for the party of their own choice and some for the party of sentimental grounds and still fewer on the cut of a man's hair or the fit of his collar.

"Upon all public questions it is greatly to the happiness of family life that women voters usually accept the opinion of their men as just and final."

The following was prepared by a man who has had much to do with public matters in Idaho since Statehood, but who is not a politician nor has he ever sought an office:

"I worked to get the equal suffrage measure passed and am sorry for it, and like every one else here cannot see that it has bettered anything, but would not make any effort to take the franchise away again.

of the question held by those who are opposed to woman suffrage.

There have been one or two elections in Denver, where the better classes united and swept the field with their candidates. In these elections it was to some extent inspiring to see women go to the polls with husbands or male relatives and not only cast their ballots for the man they wanted to elect but also labor among their friends to secure votes for him. They even took interest in the judges, clerks and precinct workers, sending them refreshments and cigars.

But such occurrences have been rare. The rule has been that respectable women who vote are strong partisans, are driven to the polls by relatives or selfish considerations, or vote to help needy relatives or friends who plead that retention in office hinges upon ability to get out votes. In these cases principles and personal character of candidates cut no figure, it is simply a question of getting the women to the polls by hook or by crook.

The bestowal of the ballot on women practically doubles the field of the corrupt party boss, and the campaign committees make large appropriations for trolley for influential clubwomen and for candy for other women voters, so that dress-makers and confectioners are heartily in favor of woman suffrage.

So far as woman suffrage in large cities is concerned it is the opinion of many who have made a close study of the subject in all its phases that it is practically an unmixed evil. There is so little that can be said in its favor and so much that can be proved against it that its advocates are simply overworked when the matter is discussed fully.

The officeholders of the equal suffrage States—the United States Senators, Congressmen, Governors and legislators—oppose woman suffrage but dare not say so. They go on the stump and profess to favor it, but whenever they find a chance to fight it without being found out they may be found arrayed against it. It is a fact that when asked by intimate friends or by persons they have confidence in if they believe in equal suffrage nine out of ten of them will answer unqualifiedly in the negative.

The most earnest advocates of woman suffrage lay great stress upon its benefits to the small cities, towns and villages, but there is no strong evidence that they are right. On the contrary, it may be said that four-fifths of these places would be better off without it. The petty quarrels and jealousies of the people of the hamlets always have a direct influence upon the voters, and in most cases this influence is detrimental to the interests of the community.

The immoral women are usually forced to vote, and in many Denver elections have been fairly herded to the polls by policemen and compelled to vote according to orders.

Women in voting obey or disobey their husbands just as they do in other matters and it requires argument to convince them that they should change their candidates to please their husbands. Colorado has the Australian ballot, but the bosses manipulated the law so that it is easy for insiders to learn just how every person votes.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah, April 24.—Woman suffrage in Utah dates back to early Territorial days, when the Mormon with the largest number of wives had most influence in politics. Under present conditions, with polygamy almost eliminated, the question of woman suffrage is still debatable in this State.

The fact that there are three distinct political parties in Utah without reference to the Socialists and smaller organizations renders it difficult to determine the exact effect of any factor in politics. The matter is further clouded by the natural reticence of men in public life who are opposed to woman suffrage but cannot afford to go on record with such views in this community.

Here is considered with reference to the Mormon Church. Persons antagonistic to the Church insist that woman suffrage gives it an undue advantage.

It is pointed out that women are more susceptible than men to ecclesiastical influence, and that therefore the large families common among the Mormons increase the power of the Church in politics. It is undeniable that the proportionate vote cast by Mormon women is greater than that of non-Mormon women. The Mormon women walk to the polls, while many gentle women remain away unless carriages are sent for them.

Although the Republican and Democratic parties maintain their organization in Utah, party lines are largely lost sight of owing to the intense feeling developed over local questions. On moral questions and such matters as education and prohibition the women are undoubtedly a factor on the side of higher civic standards. In their general influence as a class they are in the general atmosphere of the voting places.

In the determination of the broader political questions most women seem content to accept the judgment of their husbands. Hardly a case is known of a married woman differing from her husband to the extent of affiliating herself with a different political party.

The women of the underworld are used by unscrupulous politicians. They are ready to vote as a unit for the party leading, and are a factor to be reckoned with in the particular ward in which they are established.

Clubwomen devote some attention to practical politics, but as a class seem more interested in the art and architecture of ancient Egypt than in the local pure food laws, public health measures and juvenile courts. Women of the poorer classes are largely prevented from taking any active part in politics by the demands of the day's work and unless subjected to unusual influence cut little figure.

A majority of the qualified women cast their votes and except where the peculiar local conditions intervene the general effect of their voting is toward a higher level of civic affairs.

At the time of the constitutional convention in 1895 Brigham H. Roberts and others of the more liberal leaders of the Mormon Church made a fight to have woman suffrage postponed until such time as the question of Church interference in politics should be definitely settled. They did not openly announce their motive, but were influenced by the belief that woman's greater susceptibility to ecclesiastical influence would tend to prolong the settlement of this vexing question. They were outvoted by the more radical Mormon element which controlled the convention.

VOTE ON SCHOOL MATTERS.

Lack of Interest in Nebraska—Decided Success in Wisconsin.

LINCOLN, Neb., April 24.—Women can vote in Nebraska only for candidates for membership in the boards that have control and direction of the schools.

There is a restriction upon this right, as a woman to vote must have children of school age or be herself the owner of taxable property. This practically bars from the so-called immoral women from participation.

So far as this experiment is concerned it has been a failure. As a rule the women do not participate in school elections where use of the ballot is necessary.

They attend in small numbers the annual meetings at which school trustees are elected in the country districts. In the cities they turn out to vote only when some matter of special interest is involved or a woman is a candidate, and then the vote is not very large.

The explanation of this lack of interest is that there is no special incentive in most instances all they can do to choose between candidates selected by the men. Here and there in the State a woman is found upon a school board, but in a number of these cases it is due to the special activity either of the woman herself as interested in school work or to the desire of some woman's club to secure representation on the board.

The indifference of the women has been due largely to the fact that until the recent enactment of the direct primary law they had no hand in the selection of candidates for the school board. That duty was usually performed at the fall and of a city convention composed of delegates in the selection of whom women had no part.

In those elections at which there has been an unusual women's vote cast the clubwomen or those interested in school work, however, were very little concerned. As these women voters are usually independent thinkers their choice is more likely to be followed by their husbands than they are to follow the choice of the men.

The public schools of the State have as a rule been free from graft. The State Constitution provided for a large endowment fund from land, and special pride is taken in barring out the politicians from a part in the management of the schools.

The Nebraska Equal Suffrage Association, a well organized body intent upon two things, the granting of municipal suffrage to women by statute and the elimination from the Constitution of any sex distinction between voters. Each legislative session has found it with more votes, and at the session just closed both bills passed the House and were killed in the Senate by the narrow margin of two or three votes.

The indications are that suffrage will be granted to Nebraska women in a very short time. There is a growing tolerance among men toward it. This is perhaps due more to the conviction of the women's inherent right to vote than to any belief that a majority of the women really demand the ballot.

It is within the bounds of possibility that the campaign of 1910 will find the Republicans pledged to woman suffrage. The lineup of the brewing and distilling interests with the Democrats in the last campaign, brought a strength sufficient to the Republicans, has crystallized a determination among Republican leaders to punish those interests, and granting the ballot to women, it is believed, will mean county option and then prohibition in Nebraska. Evidence of this determination is found in the fact that almost every Republican voted for woman suffrage in both houses at the late session of the Legislature.

MILWAUKEE, Wis., April 24.—Voting by women has proved successful in Wisconsin as far as the experiment has been made. The women have the right of suffrage on questions relating to the schools, and the ballot has only been sought as a rule by clubwomen and those especially active in school work.

There is a prospect that women will get the right to vote at all elections for State officers or officers of a lower rank. A bill has passed the Senate providing for a referendum on this question, and enough suffrage sentiment to send the bill to the voters of the State for decision in 1910.

The experiment of giving the ballot to women in Wisconsin has worked well as regards the offices for which women can vote. The women individually and in their clubs have evinced a much greater interest in school affairs. Since women have been elected county superintendents and have given excellent service.

Women in their campaigns pay particular attention to the feminine vote, and make as active a campaign as any of the men against whom they are pitted. In many cases they are better politicians, this being due, their sisters say, to the fact that they play an honest game in politics.

Women as a rule do not pay much attention to the election. The voting is chiefly of the clubwoman class and these women have too many ideas of their own to be controlled by the wishes of their husbands. They have succeeded in electing two women to the Milwaukee school board, and these women have proved themselves a power in the board.

The poor woman takes little or no interest in the election.

The woman voter in Milwaukee is faced this year by a difficulty owing to a failure to have a registration law. The women have decided to register, and in case the politicians decide to take advantage of this fact could easily be barred from voting. There has never yet been a case, however, where a woman's vote has been questioned. She enters the booth, marks her ticket just like a man and passes out.

Some trouble is expected this year on account of the voting machines. There will be candidates for several judicial offices and the women who are not used to the machine will pull more levers than they know how to use in the election. This may be remedied by requiring the woman to vote on a paper ballot instead of by machine.

DETROIT, Mich., April 24.—Woman suffrage has made slight headway in Michigan. It is in the incipient stage of voting for school inspectors, which is done languidly for the most part, and only where there is vigorous campaigning on the part of the women.

Now before the Legislature recommending that property owners among women have the franchise in regard to bonding issues, and Detroit women expect shortly to exercise the franchise in the matter of a new convention hall.

The so-called immoral woman does not vote in Detroit. Two years ago she made a try at it, but the attempt was an utter failure. It happened this way:

A politician canvassed the red light district for supporters and transported about fifty women to the booths of their districts, where they voted, with the result that a scandal was threatened for a time. The matter was eventually hushed up, but the women were strictly prohibited from making a reappearance at the booths. These women in Detroit are at the mercy of the police and have to obey orders.

Women vote as their husbands, in almost every case, and stanchly support them in the event of their running for office.

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Several attempts have been made to give women universal or equal suffrage with men in this State, but they have always failed in the Legislature. Ex-United States Senator Wilbur F. Sanders was a strong advocate of woman suffrage, and with his death several years ago the movement seems to have lost that leadership necessary to give the project any great standing. While eight or even six years ago woman suffrage was always the subject of a contest, sometimes a bitter struggle, in the Legislature, since the death of Col. Sanders no bill has even been introduced.

Col. Sanders was one of Montana's most positive characters, and when his interest was once aroused he moved heaven and earth to accomplish his ends. Judging by the progress he made it seems safe to predict that had he lived women would now be on an equal footing with men as regards the franchise.

So far as woman suffrage exists in this State it is considered a success. That is, a large proportion of the respectable women take it upon themselves to vote when opportunity offers. Among the so-called immoral women there is no tendency to avail of this right save in exceptional cases.

The women who vote are doubtless influenced more or less by their husbands or male members of their family; but on the whole they are independent. The issues extended along political lines it is difficult to say what would be the outcome.

VOTE ON TAXATION ONLY.

Taxpayers Women of Louisiana Have Used Suffrage Admirably.

NEW ORLEANS, April 24.—The only form of suffrage possessed by the women of Louisiana is the right of taxing in person or by proxy on questions of taxation submitted, such as bond issues. This privilege was accorded the taxpayers women of the State by the constitutional convention of 1898 and was generally regarded as a graceful way of refusing a petition presented by Louisiana women, which requested that the educated taxpayers woman be allowed to solve honorably and permanently the question of white supremacy.

While this small grant of suffrage was originally viewed as an almost useless concession because in New Orleans at least the State had reached the limit of taxation it has proved of incalculable value. Hardly had the privilege been granted when the return of yellow fever after an absence of nearly twenty years created consternation.

Senseless quarantines prevailed on all sides, business was paralyzed and commercial and property values fell tremendously. It was realized that something must be done and done quickly to restore public confidence.

This crisis antedated the knowledge that yellow fever was of mosquito origin. The prevailing theory was that the fever was a filth disease, and the business interests of New Orleans realized that to restore the necessary public confidence some form of hygienic regeneration must be effected.

New Orleans, although the domicile of 300,000 people, had no sewerage system; a magnificent plan of drainage was plodding along at a rate that would have taken twenty years to carry it out; an inadequate water supply was also a menace to the city's health. How to secure these much needed municipal improvements was the question.

It was finally agreed to launch the project of a general property tax on every dollar of assessed property, which revenue added to the money then available for drainage purposes would provide the means to insure a successful bond issue. Here, then, with the woman's scrap of suffrage not six months old, an opportunity presented itself for its very valuable use.

In special elections of this character the law provides that a call for such an election must be made through a petition signed by not less than one-third of the taxpayers. It was here that the women of New Orleans did good work. For it is obvious that to persuade people already taxed to the limit of the law to vote to tax themselves further is not an easy undertaking.

In the development of the campaign it was proved that the women taxpayers, at the outset variously estimated at from 1,000 to 5,000 in number, formed nearly two-thirds of the taxpayers in New Orleans. It was estimated that 25,000 was a liberal estimate of the total number of taxpayers, including in the count those eligible to vote on licenses and bond issues. The actual number of women taxpayers proved to be 15,000.

It was almost entirely through the efforts of the women in parlor meetings that the bulk of the petitioners were secured. At the election the women voted in considerable numbers in person. They were the women who had cast their ballots for a drainage system bearing

available sitting or standing room, the Senate slaughtered the resolution without a word of debate.

Mass meetings were immediately held and legislators were denounced. Notice was also served that a personal campaign would be made against every Senator who voted against the measure that is a candidate for office at the expiration of his present term.

Interviews with members of the Legislature do not reveal that individual contempt for the woman suffrage idea which their official actions might sometimes suggest. They declare, in a majority of instances, that the moment they are convinced that anything like a majority of the women desire the ballot the movement will have their support.

Unfortunately for the women the school election in Des Moines held on Monday, March 8, occurred while the Legislature was in session. Des Moines has between 90,000 and 100,000 population. Of all the women who had the right to vote only 187 voted. As Des Moines is the headquarters of the woman suffrage movement in this State legislators used this incident with considerable effect in showing the general indifference among women toward the ballot. The light vote in Des Moines is a sample of the indifference shown throughout the State.

It is noticeable that the women who do vote are as a rule prosperous or at least well to do. The women less well off are not conspicuous at the polls, and the so-called immoral women pay no attention to the privilege.

In fact the influence of woman at the polls in Iowa is so inconsiderable that it never seems to be taken into account by the politicians.

HELENA, Mont., April 24.—There are only two classes of elections in Montana at which women may vote—school and taxpayers. Where any municipality holds an election for the voting of bonds for any enterprise women taxpayers may vote. Likewise they may vote at all school elections.

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completion, a completed sewerage system, and a filtered water supply is usually admitted to be the work of New Orleans's voting women. A few years previous, when men taxpayers alone could vote, there was defeated a special tax of one mill for the completion of the drainage.

Many elections in the parishes have been held for various improvements since then, and the women have responded in the most public spirited way. Upon the authority of the late superintendent of elections it can be said that through women possessing this power the school facilities for the children of the State have been improved to a degree which could not have been attained had the voting mothers been deprived of their privilege.

The general opinion in Louisiana today is that the granting of this suffrage right to the women of the State has been of great public benefit.

Strs Refused Minnesota Women.

St. Paul, Minn., April 24.—Woman suffrage in Minnesota has gone down to defeat, at least for the time being.

In both branches of the State Legislature at its present session, the women cause has many advocates, but the movement was without leadership. The main bill was introduced in the Senate by Ole Sage and was defeated.

A New Yorker, Country Horn, Recalls an Experiment of His Youth.

"Just for the mischief of the thing and to see how she would act," said a New York citizen up State born, "I bring then a 'way back urchin of inquiring mind, I set a pet bantam duck of mine to hatching out a couple of hawk eggs. Whether the experiment was a success in its results depends somewhat on the way you look at it."

I purloined the eggs from the hawk's nest in an old dead tree back in the Bald Hill woods when the old hawks were off their job temporarily; but I was intercepted by them before I got away from the tree. They clawed and clutched at me the fiercest kind, but I got away with the eggs.

"I lost a yellow corduroy cap I was wearing at the time, though, for it was knocked off by one of the hawks. I don't know what it was doing, but